

# Michigan State Waterways Commission Meeting Minutes

Location: Virtual meeting

Date: February 4, 2021

## **Roll call**

### **Present for the Waterways Commission:**

- Commissioner, Chair, Barb Brooks
- Commissioner, Vice-Chair, Mary Rising
- Commissioner, Secretary, Pat Egan
- Commissioner, Pete Beauregard
- Commissioner, Elaine Isely
- Commissioner, Mark Yonan

### **Others Present:**

- Ron Olson, DNR
- Jackie Blodgett, DNR
- Maia Turek, DNR
- Vicki McGhee, DNR
- Jordan Byelich, DNR
- Paul Petersen, DNR
- Linnae Dawson, DNR
- Michael Desnoyer, DNR
- Scott Pratt, DNR
- Michelle Wieber, DNR, Recorder
- Mike Terrell, DNR

### **Guest Speaker:**

- Mike Terrell, Metro District Supervisor, DNR

### **Public Attendees:**

- Mark Breederland
- Bradly Moffat
- Matt Weaver
- John Meyers
- Jeff Wagner
- Victor Camaio

- Stacey Welling-Haughey

## **Meeting minutes**

### **Opening Comments:**

- Chair, Barb Brooks called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m., February 4, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually.
- The meeting began with reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Public Appearance:**

- Mark Breederland, Michigan Sea Grant, expressed Michigan Sea Grant is excited to begin work on updating the Clean Vessel Act, throughout 2021, and will engage with the Commission periodically with updates.
- Bradly Moffat, resident of Petoskey, had questions for the Commission regarding the frequency of harbor dredging, also discussed concerns of shoaling.

### **Action Items:**

- MOTION: Chair, Barb Brooks asked for a motion for approval of the minutes from the December 4, 2020 Michigan State Waterways Commission meeting. The motion was put into place by Commissioner Pat Egan and was seconded by Vice-Chair Mary Rising. Motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

### **Committee Reports:**

No updates to report on.

### **Guest Speaker:**

- Mike Terrell, Metro District Supervisor, presented to the Commission the efforts in keeping up with the complications caused by the high-water levels. Across the District, multiple locations are still experiencing flooding and sedimentation situations. Current projects are occurring at Lexington Boating Access Site (BAS), Lexington State Harbor, Clinton River Cutoff BAS, Grayhaven State Harbor, and Harley Ensign Memorial BAS. A Detroit River boating access study was completed, which included a survey on boating access.

### **General Updates**

- Ron Olson announced to the Commission that a virtual retreat would be scheduled to be held prior to the Commission's next meeting on April 30. The event would be facilitated and the most pressing goals for 2021 will be identified, discussed and strategies mapped out. Despite COVID-19, harbor reservations are coming in strong. Harbors are expected to open without delay this season, as the hiring and spending freezes that caused delays during last season are no longer in place. The FY22 budget will be presented to the Governor next week.

- Paul Petersen mentioned that a few communities have submitted their Waterways Program Grants, and the deadline to do so is April 1, 2021.
- Commissioner Pete Beauregard mentioned Michigan Boating Industries Association (MBIA) held a meeting with their legislative committee regarding boater registration fees. MBIA is in the process of putting together a recommendation that would help increase revenue.

### **Financial Updates**

- Financial information updates were provided to the Commissioners in the meeting packet. Michael Desnoyer provided further details including that gas tax revenue for FY20 is down \$2.1 million, compared to FY19. Total revenue generated from boating registration was down \$500,000 compared to FY19. Expenditures trended down over \$2.5 million from FY19, citing the spending, and hiring freeze caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Operations Updates**

- Linnae Dawson updated the Commission on operational items. Graphs were provided in the meeting packet, representing state harbor year-to-date (YTD) net nights and YTD reservations from October-December, in which both are up compared to last year. Variance requests from the December meeting have been addressed with the communities. Grayhaven State Harbor is set to be a part of the reservations system. High water remains an issue at some harbors, although Hammond Bay State Harbor is anticipated to be open this season, after being closed in 2020. It is looking favorable that Mackinac Island State Harbor will have their electric pedestals operating this season. Linnae mentioned a harbor meeting is being planned for May, as the last couple were canceled.

### **Project Report**

- The Michigan State Waterways Development Program Project Report was included in each commissioner's meeting packet for their information.
- Jordan Byelich provided an update with slides of a project repair at Port Austin State Harbor. This consists of removal of a portion of the docks and fingers piers on the west dock, and gangway improvements. Another project at the harbor is the harbormaster building will receive roof and HVAC updates. Jordan also updated the Commission on the Eagle Lake EGLE Administrative Hearing that occurred in January. The DNR has been involved with land acquisition and development on Eagle Lake in Cass County going back 10 years. Upon design and the acceptance of a permit from EGLE, the permit was contested by two parties. Nearly four days of hearing ensued. The judge anticipates having his decision by July.

### **Transmittals**

- A notice regarding Erma Henderson Marina's closure for the season was included in the meeting packet for Commissioners for their information.

**Great Lakes Water Level Report**

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District Great Lakes water level outlook was included in each Commissioner's meeting packet for their information.

**Adjournment**

- The meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

The next Michigan State Waterways Commission Meeting: April 30, 2021